

Summary

Ward III G.R.I.P. Neighborhood Conversation, September 19, 2007

From Post-it Map exercise:

- At Fontana Ave., keep lights because they provide good access to Northwest Community Center
- At several locations, need to limit access to neighborhoods, similar to Catalina Vista or west side of Campbell Ave.
- At Campbell Ave.: Catalina Vista is an historic neighborhood (Grant Rd. to Elm St. and Tucson Blvd. to Campbell Ave.) and is the first planned community that is still intact. Preserve the buffer zone on Grant Rd. Light rail (mass transit) should be implemented as a corridor for one of the lanes. There are air quality issues that should be considered.
- At Campbell Ave.: Improve infrastructure by burying utility lines. Improve shade at bus stops. Soft surface on road for noise mitigation.
- At Country Club Rd. or in general: Stoplight synchronization. Right now it seems the lights are synched to change unless you drive 45-50 mph.
- Country Club Rd. area: Keep combined homes/businesses in current location; their central location is unique and affordable. Economic survival is fragile.
- Country Club Rd. area: Concentration of antiques and used furniture shops contribute to funky character of the neighborhoods.
- General: With the 2 new lanes, designate 1 lane for bikes, pedestrians, skaters and runners. It would be better to not dedicate the 2 new lanes to cars and trucks so that air quality does not worsen and so that noise does not increase and so commuter miles don't go up for the region, so that CO² emissions do not go up.
- General, but specifically at Swan Rd.: Need Park and Ride.
- In Columbus Blvd. area: Access to the residential street, Orchard Ave., probably improves traffic flow near Columbus. If Orchard is closed off, maneuvering into properties on Grant near Columbus may be more difficult.
- General: HAWK lights should be coordinated with traffic to help pedestrians stop large amounts of traffic.

Question 1: What do we already know about Grant Road?

- New structures (development) are appearing.
- There are many historic homes.
- There is a school (Doolen).

- Congestion.
- Buses slow traffic.
- It's scary.
- There are many small business that are affordable to business owners because of low rents/costs.
- Hazards for bikes and pedestrians.
- Lots of drainage problems that extend beyond 2 blocks off Grant Rd.
- Many working class neighborhoods [implied with economic fragility].
- There are many gas stations which are biohazards.
- It's hard to cross.
- Business' access near intersections make it unsafe.
- The proximity to The University of Arizona means additional cars, buses, bicycles.
- It is a main East/West corridor.
- Currently, some areas have room for bikes and parking with frontage property.
- Much of it is not handicap-accessible.
- There is a lack of adequate bus routes.
- The narrower roads around Campbell Ave. slow traffic.
- There are 3 distinct areas: Commercial (west), Residential (Park Ave. to Country Club Rd.) and Commercial (east to Swan Rd.).

Question 2: What characteristics along Grant Road should be preserved?

- Bookman's—"it rocks!" Because of its location, it serves as a community center, it is affordable and a good bookstore.
- Good local restaurants and businesses.
- Existing vegetation (example: 1101 E. Grant Rd.—Fontana Ave.- has a mature saguaro; to move it would kill it). Also, mature trees provide shade.
- Dunkin' Donuts on Swan Rd. is an gathering place for elders, i.e. "The Geezers Club".
- Mandarin Grill: Good, affordable, has a history.
- Ward III Office: Used by neighborhoods, convenient.
- Mountain Ave. area, particularly north of Grant Rd. is of concern.
- Doolen Middle School and its connection to Boys & Girls Club = youth gathering places.
- Historic Brick TB home on Los Altos: Can it be moved back but saved?
- Condemn the least amount of vacant land.
- Fire station because of safety and too expensive to move.
- Keep buffer at Catalina Vista neighborhood because it's a rare, historic, planned area.
- Kingfisher: This restaurant is not a chain and is successful.

Questions 3: What do you think will change in the future?

And Question 4: How will these changes affect the area?

- Add a mass transit lane in order to reduce smog and improve air quality.
- A loss of local businesses will mean a loss of tax revenues.
- Loss of local businesses means more chain businesses that can afford higher costs and rents.
- A loss of character (Grant Rd. is “totally Tucson”) will result in a bland, “anywhere” place and it will be more expensive to live and work there.
- More growth is coming which means more density and mass transit.
- A continued lack of access to (affordable gasoline) fuel can lead to cleaner fuels; it could also mean “the end of us.”
- A loss of parking for businesses will mean a loss of business income.

Question 5: What characteristics along Grant Road should be changed?

- Consider properties that some business want to give up as parking and access for businesses that want to stay.
- Improve infrastructure and utilities; bury utilities.
- Acknowledge [accept?] existing density for affordable/workforce housing.
- Consider incomes of business owners and residents; needs to be maintained as affordable, and improve bus services.
- Improve landscape for mass transit with shade.
- Use utility space for community park.
- Create a pedestrian bridge at Country Club Rd. and at Fontana Ave.
- Connect bus service to Mansfield Park.
- Create median barriers to discourage jay-walking.
- Put bus pullouts everywhere!
- Extend Grant Rd. bus route past Keeling neighborhood.
- Have bus pullouts like at Broadway Blvd. near Park Place.
- Use rubberized pavement to slow traffic (similar to Campbell Ave. and Mountain Ave. intersections)
- Make the design at a human scale.
- Have a HOV lane and transit lane.
- Limit neighborhood access to manage neighborhood traffic. Example: Catalina Vista
- Keep lighting for Northwest Neighborhood Center.
- Put double lefts on Campbell Ave.

Question 6: What do we fear and hope for along Grant Road?

FEARS –

- Houses will lose their financial values.
- Disruption to existing properties.
- Occupants paying low rents will be displaced and where will they go?
- It will encourage more people to drive more.
- Additional 2 lanes are a temporary solution.
- We will need more money than is allocated.
- The areas around Oracle Rd. and Stone Ave. will not be treated fairly because lower income businesses and neighborhoods occupy the area.

HOPES –

- That this will be a design planned to address the needs of the area.
- It can become a nice, gracious boulevard such as those in Europe.
- That the design will be sensitive and logical.
- That there will be technical assistance funding to help businesses with relocation.
- That there will be a human scale to the design – pedestrian crossings and signage.
- It will demonstrate a fairness in the impacts on businesses and neighborhoods.
- That it will be done in sections/not all at once.